STARVATION OF SNAKES

A Process in Operation in the Interest of Science.

Adders Undergoing Severe Treatment by Officials of the Smithsonian Institution—Reptiles Not Quite So Bad as They Are Painted—Assisting the Adders to Undress.

Few persons have a partiality for snakes, but it does seem a cruel thing to deliberately starve two unoffensive reptiles to death before putting them in a jar of alcohol for preservation as specimens. This was and probably is being done at a room in the Smithsonian Institution by a scientist who calmly conducted his classification unheeding the frightful suffering close beside him. The visitor to the professor's room was engaged in watching an assistant drawing a Cuban boa constructor which he did from the life or rather the death, the defunct reptile being hoisted out of its jar every now and then by means of a huge pair of pincers and accurately scaled with a pair of compasses. All around, upon shelves, tables, and floor, were jars, large and small, containing a vast variety of snakes, frogs, lizards, etc., all rendered long since harmless. A faint rustling sound, however, became at length so distinctly audible that the fear of a specimen having, by some means or other, broken loose, became almost inevitable. The assistant, being question, merely pointed to a wooden box with a screen top which had hitherto escaped the visitor's notice, and which, being more closely examined, was found to contain two adders. They had been caught not far from the District and had occupied their present quarters ever since last summer without food and water. The immense vitality of snakes which enables them to go without food for several months is accountable for their holding out so long, but it must also be remembered that the sufferings of starvation are increased in proportion with this same amount of vital force in the victim.

One of the adders was shedding its skin, the dry, flaky colorless substance, as it peeled off, revealing a beautifully marked under-surface. Somewhat to the astonishment of the spectator the assistant quietly opened the lid of the box and assisted the snake in its shedding process by taking hold of the portion already off and pulling it with as much unconcern as though it were a glove on his hand. The adder did not attempt to bite, nor did it seem at all disposed to resist the attentions of the professor's assistant. Left to itself it continued to unburden itself of its old clothing, as it were, and to reveal the gorgeous raiment with which nature had provided it. Poor reptile! It was impossible not to liken the operation to a condemned person about to be hanged arraying themselves in their very best toilet for the occasion. But then hanging, indeed, any quick mode of demise, is mercy itself to the misery endured by the reptile slowly, very slowly, starving to death. It was absolutely pitiable to watch the operation. The snake, in shedding its old skin is popularly supposed to crawl through a narrow opening or rub itself against some rough surface as the bark of a tree. That it can, however, dispense with any such assistance with little or no inconvenience was sufficiently demonstrated by the adder in question accomplishing the end very efficiently by muscular action alone. The movement of the ribs, by which the snake progresses, peels the old skin off gradually, the entire process lasting, in the case of a snake some three feet long, about three quarters of an hour.

A few pebbles in the box and a tin water can which was well-nigh eaten by rust from disuse, were eagerly examined every now and then, by the starving creature in search of food, while its companion, a small grey adder, had evidently long since given it up as a bad job, and had coiled itself up in a corner, apparently lifeless.

It may be remarked, generally, that the serpent, ever since the Garden of Eden episode, has been a much maligned animal. So far from wishing to intrude in human affairs, it has ever sedulously sought to avoid mankind, and it seldom strikes, unless first attacked, except for food. It is a fact that among the present large number of snakes in the Zoological Park, only one, a king snake, has been taught to dispense with live food. Yet it is a well known fact, that snakes can be educated to feed exclusively upon the meat of animals that have already been killed.

The fact that they prefer and apparently require live animals arises from the habit acquired by them in a state of native, where they, of course, could procure no other kind of food. It is perfectly wanton cruelty, therefore, many are inclined to think, to put live animals into the dens of snakes, where they remain perhaps, for weeks in torment indescribable, until the reptile gets ready to devour them.

The Queen as a Child.

(From the London Truth.)

The Queen never lost a child in the nursery, though she had delicate children. Those who have gone before her were grown up and married. She was fond of children when a growing and a grown-up girl. It pleased her to be taken to visit infant schools of which she was an interested patroness. But she was a domineering playmate. I have met old ladies who in youth were privileged to play with her at Kensington. Though she was only heiress presumptive, she always stood on her dignity with them and never allowed them to be familiar.

One of them was niece of the Honorable something Keppel, who belonged to the Duke of Sussex's little household at Kensington. She and the Queen used to dress dolls together, until one day the sprig of Albemarle nobility called one of the dolls "Vic." The princess ordered her to leave off so calling the doll, inasmuch as she had not had "permission." A sturdy refusal was given, with the consequence that the Duke of Sussex's gentleman was begged by his little niece not to bring such a disrespectful child to play with her again.

The Queen was the first royal child who was taught the use of the globes.

TRAVEL ON WESTERN LAKES.

Terrors of a Winter Trip on an Icy Inland Sea.

(From the Chicago Chronicle.)

"Hello, old man, when you goin' to take that trip to Milwaukee you talked about last week?"

"Goin' tonight."

"Good enough. Got to go myself tonight."

"Hurrah. Let's go together and have a high old time."

"I'm with you."

"All right—meet you at the depot. Which road will——"

"Road nothin'. I'm not goin' up on any railroad."

"How's that?" asked the other as his chin dropped and he looked in blank amazement at his friend.

"I said I wasn't going up on any railroad."

"Goin' to fly, skate, or walk?"

"None of 'em; goin' up on a boat."

"Go on, go on, what you talkin' about? This is winter. I'm afraid you're gettin' 'em again. I guess you think this is summer time and you're figurin' on a hot weather excursion."

"My boy, you are displaying your ignorance. You don't know any more about this than a lot of other people in Chicago. You follow me and we'll have a nice, cheap, comfortable trip to the place where the beer grows."

The protesting friend succumbed to the inducements held out for a winter water trip to Milwaukee and at a quarter of 8 o'clock the two went down to the river and boarded a boat that started up the lake fifteen minutes later.

Probably a comparatively small part of the city is aware of it, but two Chicago boat lines—the Goodrich and the Barry—run passenger vessels all winter long when the river and the lake are not absolutely impassable from floating ice. It is very seldom, however, that there is ever enough ice in the river to seriously interfere with the passage of a steamer. All of the vessels used in the winter are strong, large boats capable of cutting through all ordinary fields of ice almost as if they were so much foam. So far this winter boats have not been delayed a single minute in starting on account of floating ice, but in other years there have been times when the ice was so heavy that boats were kept in port for two or three days.

Every night over fifty people leave Chicago for Milwaukee by boat. The boats leave early in the evening and arrive in the Milwaukee harbor long before sunrise the next morning. The passengers can have their breakfasts on board the steamer in the morning or can go to the city before, just as they please. Milwaukee is about eighty-five miles from Chicago and boats easily make the trip in eight hours or there abouts. After a brief stay in the harbor of the cream city the boat starts back to Chicago with passengers, and also freight. Once a week a boat leaves here for Sturgeon Bay, which is about 240 miles from Chicago, and twice a week boats leave for Kewaunee and Algoma, which points are approximately 200 miles from the city. Twice a week boats go to Manitowoc and three times a week vessels leave for Waukegan and Kenosha. The Milwaukee boats of one line stop every night at Racine on the way.

All of the steamers except those bound to Milwaukee are really of more importance as freighters than they are as passenger liners, for there are comparatively few people who leave Chicago for these smaller towns. But the freight business to the minor points remains just as strong in the winter as in the summer and the lake freight rates are such that steamers get a good per cent of the trade. There are accommodations, however, for passengers on all of these boats bound for the little cities with cargoes of freight and all of them have a few passengers as a rule, but the passenger business on all other than the Milwaukee boats is almost infinitesimal in comparison with the freight traffic.

Usually a winter trip on Lake Michigan from Chicago to the north is not a pleasure jaunt by any means. The howling winds that come down from the north sweep the decks of the passenger boat like a hurricane, while ever and anon the bitter blast carries aboard a driving sheet of ice-cold spray that cuts like a knife. In the worst weather this spray often turns to ice almost as quick as it touches the deck, and the vessel comes into port veneered with ice from stem to stern. Of course few boat passengers take to lake travel on account of any great fondness for icy blasts and freezing spray. They don't get out on the deck and wander up and down, chatting about the pleasant evening while a 10-below zero wind is sweeping across the jibboom poop of the boat. They stay inside of the cabin where it is nice and warm and where only the sounds of the howling blasts penetrate.

It may not all be so pleasant and safe as traveling in a luxurious sleeping car, but it is cheaper.

DURING VICTORIA'S REIGN.

Great Strides in New York Since She Began Her Rule.

(From the New York Commercial Advertiser.)

When Victoria became Queen New York city had only about 200,000 inhabitants; its fire limits extended but to Twenty-third Street; its one railroad, the New York and Harlem, incorporated to run from "the centre of the city to Harlem, seven and one-half miles," was completed as far as Yorkville (Eighty-fourth Street), and cars drawn by horses left the corner of Prince Street, on the Bowery, for Yorkville "once very hour every day of the week," and the residents and visitors were urged to take the trip because of the "great fills, deep cuts, fine bridges, and rugged, and picturesque scenery along the route." One gaslight company, the New York, had nearly twenty-nine miles of iron pipe laid, and furnished gas at 70 cents per hundred cubic feet.

Then, as now, the question of water supply was being agitated. Most of the drinking water was obtained from wells and pumps, but below Prince Street it was thought not to be good, and many wealthy families and the larger hotels used water from the springs in the upper part of the islands, brought in by the farmers. For laundry purposes cistern water was used. A commission appointed by the legislature had just reported favoring securing "pure and wholesome water" from the Croton River, and that report had just been approved by the Common Council and ratified by the people by vote. The Astor House (Park Hotel) had just been completed, and the new Custom House as well. Battery Park was the fashionable resort and promenade.

William A. Duer was president of Columbia College and James Kent its professor of law. James Tallmadge was president of the University of New York. Bishop Onderdonk was at the head of the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary. St. Patrick's Cathedral was at the corner of Mott and Prince Streets. There were but six Catholic churches in the city. The Presbyterians had the most of any denomination—thirty-three of the total of 135. There were twenty-three banks and three savings banks. It needs but a moment's thought to impress one with the stupendous strides made by the new world's metropolis during the reign of Victoria.

A Bird Shooting Story.

(From the Columbus, Ind., Republic.)

William H. Lincoln, of Columbus Lodge of Elks, who is an expert shot and a member of the local gun club, is at the pinnacle of happiness when he has a party of attentive listeners while he tells of his wonderful achievements with the gun. One day last week Brother Lincoln was sitting in the library room at the Elks Club enjoying a quiet smoke when several of the members came in and soon the conversation was lively, talking on the situations in the Philippines and China, and then on the skill of different ones present as expert shots. George Schwartzkopf related how, on different occasions, he had made some marvelous shots and that he felt he could give Lincoln a run for a short distance.

"You'd be a lobster in a match with me," said Lincoln. "I'll give you forty dead birds out of fifty and shoot for the oysters."

"Being that no betting is allowed in these rooms, we will agree to shoot and see about the oysters afterward," said Schwartzkopf.

"What kind of birds will we shoot at, George? And just to get a chance to trim your record, I'll agree to furnish the birds," said Lincoln.

"All right," remarked Schwartzkopf, with a twinkle in his eye, "we'll shoot at ostriches."

THE LITERARY BROKER.

He Helps the Author to Market and Profiteth Himself.

(From the New York Evening Post.)

So large is the literary market, and so complicated its ramifications, that it is difficult for an author to be familiar with its details. Hence the literary broker, who is as necessary to him as the Wall Street broker is to an investor. Literary brokers are new arrivals in the world of finance. There have been literary agents for centuries, but in nearly every instance they were the employes of writers, of pubishers, or of both. The broker of today is an independent business man, whose trade is a connecting link between authorship, newspaperdom, the book world, the stage, and foreign lands. He expresses the growth of literature as an industrial force.

Many causes have contributed to the change. Common-law copyright has been developed and strengthened by legislation until statutory copyright as it now exists protects ideas as thoroughly as the patent law protects inventions. Even farther reaching is international copyright, which enables a successful writer to find profitable markets in a dozen lands. Another important factor has been the legal recognition of other incorporated rights. Dr. Johnson enjoyed the common-law copyright of very questionable protection. Kipling, Doyle, Harte, Parker, and Clemens have first the book copyright; second the magazine copyright; third, serial rights; fourth, the rights of dramatization, and fifth, the rights of translation. The creation of Sherlock Holmes illustrates the possibilities of modern authorship. The stories in which the famous detective is the leading character have appeared in British and American magazines, in daily and weekly newspapers, have been published in book form, been dramatized and successfully produced, and have been translated and proved profitable in other tongues. To take advantage of these rights requires time, labor, and business ability. A few authors possess the leisure and the commercial talent requisite for this kind of work, but only one-half are willing to engage in that kind of enterprise. They find it more profitable to keep on with their literary work and transfer everything else to capable brokers. The vast body of authors dislike business and hand all such matters over to professional agents. For this reason the literary broker of the present time, especially when successful, has as much business as he can attend to, and is often compelled to turn away applications from writers of more than ordinary ability.

The growth of literary brokerage has been rapid. It seems to have started in Great Britain in the 70s and in the United States at about the same time, or possibly a few years later. In the 80s the agents on both sides of the ocean reached out across the seas, and invaded each other's territories. Today, at the beginning of the new century, there are at least fifty international brokers whose business may be compared to that of the great merchants in the leading seaports of Christendom. According to an old editor on Park Row, the first big step in the development of this branch of literary industry was made in selling the serial or newspaper rights of Brete Harte's short stories. It proved a slight success and, what was of more importance, it clearly showed that the system could be made highly lucrative in the course of time. In Great Britain the first noticeable fact was the selling of the serial rights to newspapers of the writings of two well-known novelists. The broker had no trouble with the authors, nor with the publishers. He sold the rights to ten papers, and was encouraged by his undertaking.

For a short time the book publishers expressed fear that the appearance of the stories in the papers would injure the sale of books, but to their agreeable surprise the results were the opposite of what they expected. The serial publication proved an admirable advertisement for the books. His first success emboldened the broker to more extensive operations. Inside of eight years he had built up a large trade, and today is the official representative of nine American and Canadian and forty English and Scotch writers. He also handles the manuscripts of at least a hundred "occasionals."

There are two other huge concerns in London which conduct about as big a business. In this city there are three prominent houses whose transactions reach about the same total as their British rivals. In addition are some smaller concerns which do a profitable but not over-large business. The principal houses pursue simple and efficient methods. In the late autumn they issue a programme for a long period in the coming year. One just published gives the list of novels and short stories beginning in January and running through to the middle of November. Another catalogue by an American house covers the entire year, and a third one embraces the period from January to July. These lists enable editors to pick out reading matter weeks and months in advance and give newspaper critics and reporters a capital insight into the news features of the book world.

PORES IN THE HUMAN BODY.

Twenty-eight Miles of Sweat Glands in Man's Anatomy.

(From Ainslee's Magazine.)

"It may be interesting to know that one perspires more on the right side of the body than on the left and that the skin of the palm of the hand excretes four and a half times as much proporionately to the surface of the skin as the back. The pores in the ridges of the palm number as many as 3,000 to the square inch. They are scarcest on the back, where there are only 400 to the square inch. These pores are not simple holes or perforations in the hide, as some imagine, but are little pockets lined with the same epithelium or pavement stuff that covers the external of the body. They run straight down into the deepest structure of the skin and there they kink and soil around till they look like a fishing line that has been thrown down wet. Inclosed in this knot are little veins that leak the perspiration through the walls of the tube, and it wells up to the surface of the skin.

"It is estimated that the average-sized man has 7,000,000 of these sweat glands, aggregating twenty-eight miles of tubing. Think of it! Twenty-eight miles if all those tiny tubes could be straightened out and put end to end! These figures, wonderful though they may seem, are on the very best medical authority. They are the figures of men who have given their lives to the study of this subject. But still, if they seem too large to you, there is just as good medical authority for the statement that there are 2,400,000 sweat glands on the human body, each one-fifteenth of an inch long, and that their aggregate length is two miles and a half! Think of it! Two miles and a half! If you object to that, too, I have the very best authority for the statement that they are one-quarter of an inch long and aggregate more than nine miles, or I can figure it for you at seven or twelve miles. Take your pick. Our motto is, 'We aim to please.' If one figure suits you more than another, it's yours. We can substantiate it by the very best medical authority.

"I can find only one figure, however, for the amount of liquid secreted by the skin of an average person in a year, though it is evident that the quantity must vary greatly according as the person works in an icehouse or rides a bicycle uphill. From the average person in a year's time there oozes through the pores of the skin 1,500 pounds of water. Let us see: 'A pint's a pound the world around,' two pints make one quart, four quarts one gallon—oh, well, you cipher it out for yourself. I never was much of a hand at figures."

SHEEP-EATING PARROTS

A Carnivorous Set of Birds Discovered in New Zealand.

Flocks Exposed to the Attacks of the Predatory Bipeds—Sagacious Members of the Feathered Tribe—A Group Mounted by the Scientists in the Smithsonian Institution.

A group has just been mounted in the Smithsonian Institution which represents vividly one of the most extraordinary instances in animal life that has ever come under the observation of man.

It appears that during a recent winter in New Zealand the herders of the numerous flocks of sheep in that country noticed that many of the animals were afflicted with wounds in the back or loins, sometimes severe, and occasionally so much so as to prove fatal. The cause of these wounds was a mystery until a shepherd one day saw a kea, or mountain parrot, clinging to the wool of a sheep and picking at a sore on its flank. A close watch was instituted and the birds were again many times caught in the act of wounding the sheep, the object being evidently to reach the fat surrounding the kidneys. The origin of the habit was subsequently revealed. During summer the keas inhabit the higher portions of the mountain districts, and when the severe weather destroys, or the heavy snows cover, their supply of food they descend to lower levels where the climate is more mild and food less scarce. During the winter referred to they descended lower than usual, as far, indeed, as the plains inhabited by the sheep-raisers, and finding their natural food scarce are attracted by the dressed carcasses of sheep hung upon meat-gallows. Alighting upon these they found the flesh to their liking, and particularly the fat surrounding the kidneys. "No other conclusion seems more plausible," says a scientist in connection with the Smithsonian Institution, "than that these birds possessed sufficient intelligence to recognize in the living sheep the source of this food supply, and therefore, in the absence of slaughtered meat they availed themselves of the living bodies. Recent discoveries in natural history reveal nothing stranger or more startling than the change of this parrot from an orignally purely vegetable diet, consisting of honey-producing flowers, fruits, and berries, to one of flesh—not dead flesh merely, but the quivering, steaming substance of living animals. This is, indeed, a most remarkable instance of acquired taste."

The group in the museum of the Smithsonian Institution represents faithfully a sheep attacked by two of the keas, or meat-eating parrots. The latter are mounted upon the victim's back, and engaged in tearing the flesh with their powerful beaks. The keas resemble the ordinary type of Mexican parrot with the exception that they are somewhat larger and their plumage is darker and variegated with brown.

ELECTRICAL MUSICAL WORK.

Tunes May Now Be Played on the Arcs in Halls.

(From the London Daily Mail.)

A curious discovery, which resulted from much electrical research and experiment at the Central Technical College of the City and Guilds of London Institute, is reported by W. Duddell. Mr. Duddell recently explained the discovery scientifically at the Institution of Electrical Engineers in a lecture on "Rapid Variations in the Current Through the Direct Current Arc." In more homely language Prof. Ayrton gave some interesting details recently.

"The arc, of course, is the blaze of light which exists between two sticks of carbon placed end on and between which the electric current flows.

"To illustrate the flame-music discovery I must remark that two different kinds of carbon are employed in the arc lamps used for lighting the streets, railways stations, public halls, etc. In the one kind the carbon stick is made hollow and is filled with a powdery material, while in the other kind the carbon is homogeneous. The former type of carbon is called 'cored,' the latter 'solid.'

"Now, the cored carbon arc Mr. Duddell has shown to possess no musical soul. It is deaf to all persuasion, whereas the solid carbon arc, he finds, is like the mouthpiece of a flute, ready to emit any note. The note of the flute depends, of course, on the length of the pipe, as determined most cases generated by a machine at a considerable distance.

"Hence," said the scientist, "we have this great possibility—namely, that the ordinary arc lamps at present used in lighting a hall can be played on not merely by a performer who is in the hall itself, but who may be outside it somewhere else. Consequently an audience who are paying no more attention to the arc lamps hung up above them than they would to a gasolier may be suddenly astonished to hear a tune coming from the space around them.

"I do not wish to give the impression, of course, that out of the arc lights the public may expect anything like the glory produced by a Joachim or a Paderewski, but what can be done is to produce and play tunes on electric lights while the player is invisible—and this at no great expense.

"Why, for halls, winter gardens, all buildings, in short, that are places of public resort, the possibilities of electric music in the air are very suggestive."

Mr. Duddell has also shown that the electric light arc can be used as a telephone receiver. He has already used it for the receiving of telephone currents from a transmitter spoken into in another part of the building.

A Hibernian's Ready Wit.

(From the Detroit Free Press.)

"Never cross-question an Irishman from the old sod," advises one of the foremost railroad attorneys of the age. "Even if he does not think of an answer he will stumble into some bull that will demoralize the court and jury, and whenever a witness tickles a jury his testimony gains vastly in its influence.

"Yes, I'm speaking from experience. The only witness who ever made me throw up my hands and leave the court room was a green Irishman. A section hand had been killed by an express train and his widow was suing for damages. I had a good case, but made the mistake of trying to turn the main witness inside out.

"In his quaint way he had given a graphic description of the fatality, occasionally shedding tears and calling on the saints. Among other things he swore positively that the locomotive whistle was not sounded until after the whole train had passed over his departed friend. Then I thought I had him.

"'See here, McGinnis,' said I, 'you admit that the whistle blew?'

"'Yis, sor; it blowed, sor.'

"'Now if that whistle sounded in time to give Michael warning, the fact would be in favor of the company, wouldn't it?'

"'Yis, sor; and Mike would be tistifyin' here this day.' The jury giggled.

"'Never mind that. You were Mike's friend, and you would like to help his widow out; but just tell me now what earthly purpose there could be for the engineer to blow that whistle after Mike had been struck.'

"'I preshume thot the whistle wore for the nixt man on the thrack, sor.'

"I left and the widow got all she asked."

Prose Versus Poetry.

(From the Chicago Times-Herald.)

"There," said the hopeful young man, as he placed his contribution on the editor's desk, "I wrote that poem with a pen the handle of which was made from a picket that was torn from the fence in front of a house in which Edgar Allen Poe once lived."

"Oh," replied the editor, after he had read the verses. Then he lifted up one foot and, pointing to it, said:

"Do you see that shoe? The leather of which it is made was tanned with bark a part of which may once have grown upon a tree that gave shelter to the heavy weight that struck Billy Patterson."

The young man took his MS. and, having bestowed upon the base being before him a look of scorn mingled with pity, went out.

THE RETIRED BURGLAR.

An Incident That Made a Lasting Impression on Him.

(From the New York Sun.)

"Looking one night," said the retired burglar, "from a dark hall into a dimly-lighted room, whose door was ajar, I saw in bed a woman and a child asleep. I'm no judge of children's ages, and never was, but I should say from what I could see of that child's face and of its form under the bedclothes, that it was two years old, maybe three. It was sleeping on the side of the bed toward the front.

"Asleep on the floor in front of the bed on a snug little mattress was another child of about the same age as the one in bed, or thereabouts, brought in there temporarily apparently for some reason or other that I didn't try to figure out, that being no part of my business; but this one on the floor was so placed because there wasn't room for both children in the bed.

"As I stood there looking at them, the child in the bed began to get restless, and in a minute it rolled out or twisted itself out somehow from under the bedclothes—this was in summer, and the covering over it wasn't heavy—and rolled square up to the edge of the bed. It lay still there for a minute, and then rolled back a little and I felt easier; but the next minute it rolled forward again clean to the edge, and rolled over it a little further and hung there on the edge a minute—I believe if it had hung there a second longer I'd ha' run to stop it—and then over it went.

"And I thought sure it was going to fall slam onto the floor, and just knock the breath out of that one, but it didn't do either, it fell on the matress alongside of that one and never woke that one up and never woke up itself. Well, I thought that beat everything I ever saw in the way of foks falling out of bed; but there was more to come.

"The one that fell out kept right on sleeping, and it was very still for a minute or so, and then it began to get restless again and rolled over on the matress and edged the child on the matress clean off on the floor; but even then that one didn't wake up either; it kept right on sleeping, too, on the floor, and the one that had fallen out of bed and edged this one off the matress now stretched out on the mattress perfectly easy and settled into a quiet, gentle sleep.

"But before this the mother had woke up—I don't know how sh'd missed the one in bed, but she had somehow—and she turned up the light a little and surveyed that scene on the floor and understood it right away. And she didn't disturb the one that had fallen out, that was now sleeping peacefully on the soft mattress, but she picked up the one that had been rolled off on to the hard floor and put that one in bed. So now the children had just changed places, and in a minute or two they were all settled down again, peaceful and quiet as before.

"I never was troubled with insomnia much myself; but whenever I do have a wakeful night I always think of those blessed children, that could go to bed and go to sleep and roll out of bed without ever waking up."

PHYSICIANS AND MORPHINE.

Accidental Opium Poisons That Have Ruined Many Careers.

(From the Lancet.)

That accidental opium poisoning has repeatedly cut off a useful professional career is unfortunately true. But a morphine habit which controls one in every ten or twenty men is certainly not known to exist in the medical profession. Such a habit if it does exist, must be quite exceptional. It is probably unknown among practitioners engaged in active duty. We observe that the writer speaks of the morphine habit as if it were merely a disease and nothing more. It has been customary with many persons to refer to this and other aggravated forms of self-indulgence in similar terms. They are regarded as vices which have ceased to give pleasure—as master passions which are hated but which will not be denied. Against this tyranny the will is supposed to have lost its power of resistance.

There are doubtless cases of habitual excess, the character of which is fairly so described. We are, however, of the opinion that too much has been made of such cases. It cannot be and it is not true that a vice even after long indulgence is always master and cannot be withstood.

It is equally certain that apparently confirmed inebriates and morphine takers have been enabled to release themselves and have remained in a state of freedom. The force of habit whether innocent or hateful, is usually very great, but this by no means implies that it must necessarily, even after long duration, annihilate the other controlling forces of will. To what extent it may have done so remains in many cases an unsolved problem, and in this very uncertainty lies the germ of hope. Unless we recognize this potent fact all prospect of reform, all reason for the efforts of temperance even, may be abandoned. No amount of therapeutics will make a bad man good, or a drunkard abstemious, unless he is allowed credit for such will power as he has and is assisted or obliged to use it for his moral reclamation. While, therefore, we do not deny the existence of the states known as dipsomania or morphinamania, we deprecate as pessimistic and subversive of rational treatment the too general tendency to apply these and like terms to all aggravated forms of self-indulgence.

TEACHING MICE ODD TRICKS.

A Maine Man Finds the Little Rodents Apt Pupils.

(From the Portland Express.)

Out on Forest Avenue is a mouse fancier whose residence, lest he lost caste with his neighbors, is withheld. In a pen he has half a dozen or so ordinary field mice. "They are the most sociable pets I ever had," he remarked, "and any one of them will rise to attention as he hears my step approach the pen. I have had these young ones about six months. They don't live long when cooped up, and they will come freely to my hand to eat or drink. Some of them are so tame that they will climb to my shoulder and display not the slightest alarm at being touched. They haven't acquired so much faith in all humanity, however, and have refused to trust anyone else so far.

"While mice eat a great deal for an animal so small when food is abundant they can exist for a surprising long time with next to nothing. Anyone whose house has been infested with mice and who had passed weary weeks when everything that possibly could serve as food was carefully under lock and key, finally calling to service an active ferret, will appreciate this fact. He is a mighty aggressive and tireless forager after food, not hesitating at walls or similar obstructions, through which he patiently gnaws a path. As a test of persistence in this line I hung a basket of food from the ceiling by a rope, and after a week's fast placed a mouse at a hole in the ceiling above the basket. He descended some eight feet or more on a slender cord and safely reached his haven, later climbing up again.

"All of my mice I have taken from nests about the premises, and notice that they invariably seek shelter below or behind something, never in so exposed a locality as almost any other animal would select. For a nest paper, cloth or any soft material seems to satisfy, and the exceeding fineness with which it is chopped suggests some mighty artistic work with their teeth."

Son and Sire.

(From the Newark Advertiser.)

"Father what means this clash of steel?" the boy interrogated.

"Is it of warfare, woe or weal?"

(Pardon the boy for his verbiage he is so young).

"My son, it is the scissors' snip; detaching coupons, clip by clip."

From which it appears that the boy was not to blame. He came hereditarily by it.

All Doubt Dispelled.

(From the Chicago News.)

Admiring Friend—What makes you think your discovery was so great a success?

Professor—Why, as soon as I announced the idea every savant in Europe remembered that he had known of it since he cut his first eye teeth!

A PAST MASTER OF THIEVES.

One Who Can Steal a Man's Stockings Without Detection.

(From the Chicago Chronicle.)

"Talking about slick thieves," said Captain Lavin of the stock yards police station, "the uncrowned king is a Polish Jew who lives out in my district. If he had as much brain matter as he has ingenuity, and as much daring for big crimes as he has for small ones, a Sherlock Holmes couldn't get within a mile's walk of him in a thousand years. You smile.

"Ask the boys who keep a watchful eye over the unsophisticated stock raisers who the man is they fear the most. They will tell you it is Moses Klinxi. He is afraid of turning a big trick, but when it comes to getting a watch chain, an overcoat, some trinket or the spare coins in a stockman's pocket Moses beats any light-fingered artist in the country.

"During the live stock show Moses stole a stocking off the foot of a Canadian, who had a pen of Cotswolds on exhibition; stole it when the fellow had his big cowhide boots on, and never disturbed the boot of the foot that the stocking was on, and the fellow was wide awake when it was done. One of my men caught Moses while he was getting away with the goods.

"There were half a dozen people around within a few feet of the sheep breeder and Moses when the theft was committed. This is no fairy tale.

"It was one of the big days of the show," continued the captain. "The Canadian was busy talking to some Western people about his breed of sheep. He was sitting on a bale of hay. Moses was shambling through the sheep section. How he escaped my men and got inside is something that he alone could tell. He edged up to the group around the Canadian. One of my plain-clothes men caught sight of him, and he noticed that Moses was busy with his hands.

"He could not see what the fellow was doing, and waited. In a few moments Moses dropped something into his overcoat pocket. The plain-clothes man took hold of him and, reaching into the overcoat pocket drew out a ball of red yarn. He walked Moses back to the group and, holding out the ball of yarn, asked if any of the men had been "touched." They looked and shook their heads negatively.

"The next morning the Canadian came over the police station. He wanted to know if that 'old Jew' was under arrest. Moses had been run in on general principles, and I asked the caller what had happened to him. He held up a red sock. 'The Jew stole the other,' he said to me. 'See here,' and he put his cowhide boot on a chair in my office and pointed to a little hole in the toe. 'Yesterday afternoon that fellow stole my sock through this hole. He unraveled it and wound it into a ball. One of your men caught him, but I did not know the yarn belonged to me until last night, when I pulled off my boot and found the sock was gone.'

"Moses admitted the theft. He said he saw a bit of the red sock through the hole in the toe of the boot, and he noticed it was a good quality of yarn, and, taking the blade of his knife, he started the raveling knowing that the man was too busy talking to pay any attention to the loss of a sock."

A LONG TUNNEL ON THE COAST.

Great Work Under Way by the Southern Pacific Road.

(From the San Francisco Call.)

The longest tunnel in California—and there are some pretty long ones—and one of the largest tunnels in America is now in course of construction by the Southern Pacific Company. Although the work has been going on for several months the immensity of the undertaking has never before been brought to the attention of the public nor has there been anything more than a casual reference made to the costly piece of workmanship.

The tunnel is being dug in the Chatsworth park cut-off and when completed will be a part of the new coast division between this city and Los Angeles. The cut-off is really between the towns of Monalvo and Chatsworth Park. The Santa Susana range occupies a vast field of space between these two points and it is beneath this great range that the tunnel is to pass.

The total length of the underground passage will be 7,400 feet, or nearly a mile and a half. The tunnel next largest to this is at San Fernando, the latter being 6,790 feet long. The building of this tunnel will involve the expenditure of more than $250,000. The work was started last fall and a large force of laborers is now being employed both day and night with a view to completing the structure this year.

Much blasting and dredging is necessary and machinery is being used wherever practicable. Electric lights are used to facilitate the work, which is being carried on from each end by two gangs of men and a double supply of implements. The big drills are run by electricity and a powerful blower is used to pump air into the tunnel for the men to breathe. The passage will be seventeen feet wide and twenty-one feet four inches high above the rails.

GIANT FLY-BY-NIGHT BIRDS.

The Curious Bats of the Philippine Islands.

(From the Scientific American.)

The bat of the islands, which grows in many cases to the size of the American chicken hawk, is eaten in some sections of the Philippines. The best classes of natives, however, do not eat the bats.

The mode of catching the bats is peculiar. The cities, towns, and barrios of all of the islands of the Philippine group are quite overrun with bats, which fly through the streets at night in large numbers. They fly slowly and seem incapable of dodging articles in their path.

Therefore, the native takes a long pole, puts a sort of combination hooked arrangement at the top and takes position in a street, and with the pole held erect waits for bats to come along and bump into the hooked portion. As the native sees a bat coming he plans to have the hook in its path, and as he moves the pole, so as to bring the hook into contact with the head of the bat, the latter usually strikes it with a bang and drops to the earth stunned, when the native proceeds to promptly put the bat to death.

After standing in his position for an hour or more, the native has a little pile of bats at his feet. These he takes to the market the next day and receives about 10 cents each for them. The wings, head, and, in fact, all but a small portion of each side is thrown to waste.

Getting Thrifty.

(From Puck.)

First Caddie—Gee! Sandy—I mean Jimmy—yer lookin' prosp'rous. Wot yer doin' since de links got chilly?

Second Caddie—Hoot Lad! Givin' lessons in golf dialect, yer lobster! Here's my card.

FOREIGN MAILS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., POSTOFFICE NOTICE.

Should be read daily, as changes may occur at any time.

FOREIGN MAILS are forwarded to the ports of sailing daily, and the schedule of closings is arranged on the presumption of their uninterrupted overland transit. For the week ending February 16, 1901, the last connecting closes will be made from this office as follows:

Trans-Atlantic Mails.

MONDAY—(c) At 11:05 p. m. for ITALY, per s. s. F. Bismarck, from New York, via Naples. Mail must be directed "Per s. s. F. Bismarck."

TUESDAY—(c) At 11:05 p. m. for EUROPE, per s. s. Germanic, from New York, via Queenstown.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for EUROPE, per s. s. Kensington, from New York, via Southampton. Mail must be directed "Per s. s. Kensington."

WEDNESDAY—(c) At 9:15 p. m. for FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, ITALY, SPAIN, PORTUGAL, TURKEY, EGYPT, GREECE, BRITISH INDIA, and LORENZO MARCUEZ, per s. s. La Champagne, from New York, via Havre. Mail for other parts of EUROPE must be directed "Per s. s. La Champagne."

FRIDAY—(c) At 11:05 p. m. for NETHERLANDS direct, per s. s. Potsdam, from New York. Mail must be directed "Per s. s. Potsdam."

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for ITALY, per s. s. K. M. Theresia, from New York, via Naples. Mail must be directed "Per s. s. K. M. Theresia."

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for EUROPE, per s. s. Umbria, from New York, via Queenstown.

Mails for South and Central America, West Indies, Etc.

SUNDAY—(h) At 9:15 p. m. for BERMUDA, per s. s. Pretoria, from New York.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for PORTO RICO, per s. s. Mae, from New York, via San Juan.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for ST. KITTS, MARTINIQUE, GUADELUPE (via Martinique), BARBADOS, and DEMERARA, per s. s. Uller, from New York.

MONDAY—(e) At 10:30 a. m. for NASSAU, N. P., per steamer from Miami, Fla.

(f) At 7:15 p. m. for ST. LUCIA, BARBADOS, and NORTHERN BRAZIL, per s. s. Fluminense, from New York.

TUESDAY—(f) At 10:30 a. m. for NASSAU, N. P., per steamer from Miami, Fla.

(k) At 12:00 m. for JAMAICA, per s. s. Admiral Dewey, from Boston.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for INAGUA and HAITI, per s. s. Mt. Vernon, from New York.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for CENTRAL AMERICA (except Costa Rica), and SOUTH PACIFIC PORTS, per s. s. City of Washington, from New York, via Colon. Mail for GUATEMALA must be directed "Per s. s. City of Washington."

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for CAMPECHE, CHIAPAS, TABASCO, and YUCATAN, per s. s. Seneca, from New York, via Progreso. Mail for other parts of MEXICO must be directed "Per s. s. Seneca."

WEDNESDAY—(c) At 11:05 p. m. for JAMAICA, per s. s. Admiral Sampson, from Philadelphia.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for GRENADA and TRINIDAD, per s. s. Grenada, from New York.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for BRAZIL, per s. s. Ragusa, from New York. Mail for NORTHERN BRAZIL, ARGENTINE REPUBLIC, URUGUAY, and PARAGUAY must be directed "Per s. s. Ragusa."

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for NASSAU, N. P., and the PROVINCE of SANTIAGO, CUBA, per s. s. Santiago, from New York.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for TURKS ISLAND and DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, per s. s. Cherokee, from New York.

THURSDAY—(c) At 11:05 p. m. for MEXICO, per s. s. Silverdale, from New York, via Tampico. Mail must be directed "Per s. s. Silverdale."

FRIDAY—(c) At 11:05 p. m. for VENEZUELA and CURACAO, per s. s. Maracaibo, from New York. Mail for SAVANILLA and CARTHAGENA must be directed "Per s. s. Maracaibo."

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for PORTO RICO, per s. s. Ponce, from New York, via San Juan.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for BERMUDA, per s. s. Trinidad, from New York.

(c) At 11:05 p. m. for FORTUNE ISLAND, JAMAICA, SAVANILLA, CARTHAGENA, and GREYTOWN, per s. s. Alleghany, from New York. Mail for COSTA RICA must be directed "Per s. s. Alleghany."

SATURDAY—(f) At 10:30 a. m. for NASSAU, N. P., per steamer from Miami, Fla.

Mails for NEWFOUNDLAND, by rail to North Sydney, and thence via steamer, close here daily, except Sunday, at 12:00 m., and on Sundays only at 11:30 a. m. (d) (h)

Mails for MIQUELON, by rail to Boston and thence via steamer, close here daily at 3:15 p. m. (4)

CUBA MAILS close here via Port Tampa, Fla., Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays at 2:30 p. m., and via Miami, Fla., Tuesdays and Saturdays at 10:30 a. m. (f)

Mails for MEXICO, overland, unless specially addressed for despatch by steamers sailing from New York, close here daily at 10:30 a. m. and 10:00 p. m. (k)

Mails for BELIZE, PUERTO CORTEZ, and GUATEMALA, by rail to New Orleans and thence via steamer, close here daily at 10:00 p. m., the connecting closes for which being Mondays.

Mails for COSTA RICA, by rail to New Orleans and thence via steamer, close here daily at 10:00 p. m., the connecting closes for which being Tuesdays.

Trans-Pacific Mails.

Mails for CHINA,* JAPAN, HAWAII, and PHILIPPINE ISLANDS,** via San Francisco, close here daily at 7:00 p. m., up to February 14, inclusive, for despatch per s. s. Nippon Maru. (o)

Mails for HAWAII, via San Francisco, close here daily at 7:00 p. m. up to February 18, for despatch per s. s. Zealandia. (o)

Mails for CHINA* and JAPAN, via Vancouver, close here daily at 7:00 p. m. up to February 19, inclusive, for despatch per s. s. Empress of China. Registered mail must be directed "Via Vancouver." (o)

Mails for CHINA,* JAPAN, HAWAII, and PHILIPPINE ISLANDS,** via San Francisco, close here daily at 7:00 p. m., up to February 22, inclusive, for despatch per s. s. Rio Janeiro. (o)

Mails for AUSTRALIA (except West Australia, which is forwarded via Europe), NEW ZEALAND, FIJI, SAMOA, and HAWAII, via San Francisco, close here daily after February 9, and up to March 2, inclusive, for despatch per s. s. Sierra. (o)

Mails for AUSTRALIA (except West Australia, which is forwarded via Europe, and New Zealand, which goes via San Francisco) and FIJI ISLANDS, via Vancouver, close here daily at 7:00 p. m. up to March 2, inclusive, for despatch per s. s. Warrimoo. (o)

*Mails for COCHIN CHINA are forwarded to New York for connection with European steamers.

**PHILIPPINE ISLANDS (Military Mail), despatched to San Francisco at all closes for that office, to connect with Government transports, the sailings of which are irregular.

(b) Registered mails close at 1:00 p. m. same day.

(c) Registered mails close at 8:00 p. m. same day.

(d) Registered mails close at 8:00 a. m. same day.

(e) Registered mails close at 1:00 p. m. previous Saturday.

(f) Registered mails close at 1:00 p. m. previous day.

(h) Registered mails close at 12:00 m. previous day.

(k) Registered mails close at 8:00 p. m. previous day.

(o) Registered mails close at 6:00 p. m. previous day.

JOHN A. MERRITT, Postmaster.